

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:43 p.m. at Market Square. In his remarks, he referred to Lynda Robb, wife of Senator Charles S. Robb; Mayor Kerry J. Donley of Alexandria; Sue Wrenn, State Democratic chair; William D. Dolan III, State attorney general candidate; Susan Payne, wife of L.F. Payne, Jr., candidate for Lieutenant Governor; and Yvonne Jukes, president, Fairfax Education Association.

Remarks on the 10th Anniversary of National Public Radio's "Performance Today"

November 3, 1997

Thank you very much, Martin. Ladies and gentlemen, as you can hear I'm still a little hoarse, but I'm delighted that you're here, and I'm delighted to be here. And I thank you for mentioning the biggest thrill I've had lately, the opportunity to conduct the National Symphony. Actually, I have been used to dealing with the Congress for so long now, I was surprised that they followed my lead. [Laughter] But we got through it just fine.

Welcome. The first concert held in this magnificent house was on New Year's Day, 1801, when President John Adams invited the Marine Band to play. In nearly 200 years, there have been a lot of other concerts here. More than a century ago, President Chester Arthur inaugurated the first concert right here in the East Room. And 20 years later, Theodore Roosevelt made showcasing the world's finest musicians in this room a standing tradition. Pablo Casals was among the first artists Theodore Roosevelt invited to perform, in 1904.

It was more than 50 years later that the concert to which Martin referred at the outset of the performance tonight occurred, when Casals came back for another East Room performance when President and Mrs. Kennedy lived here. This was made even more momentous, of course, by the fact that his performance was enjoyed not simply by Cabinet members and diplomats gathered in the room but by Americans of all walks of life who could tune in on their radio stations and hear the concert.

Hillary and I are very proud that we're able to continue this fine tradition tonight to have

the finest of music, from classical to jazz to opera to gospel, with all Americans. We're honored to celebrate with you the 10th anniversary of "Performance Today." It has been an extraordinary effort by National Public Radio. In just 10 years "Performance Today" has become an important part of the lives of so many of our fellow Americans—1.5 million Americans in more than 200 communities listen to "Performance Today" every single week, and I know its audience will surely grow. If every American could hear what we heard tonight, there would be a fire sale on radios throughout America and everyone would want 10 or 20 more.

We want to do what we can to continue to support the young musicians we've heard tonight—and I consider them all young. [Laughter] Even 50 is young to me. [Laughter]

As part of our White House Millennium Initiative, we'll host a series of cultural showcases, shining a spotlight on the next generation's most promising musicians, celebrating their great American creativity. Who knows what great musicians and composers will enliven our concert halls and airwaves in the 21st century—the next Marsalis or Graves or Roberts or Galway or Perahia or Ngwenyama? And thank you, young lady, by the way, for sticking up for the National Endowment for the Arts, as well. We appreciate you very much.

All of these great performers who have been here tonight have made us feel a little more alive, a little more human, and a little more noble. We thank them. And perhaps the best way we can honor their gift to us tonight is by resolving to celebrate the gifts of the future, both in the White House and on "Performance Today," for many, many years to come.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Martin Goldsmith, host of NPR's "Performance Today" program; and musician Nokuthula Ngwenyama.

Proclamation 7048—National Adoption Month, 1997

November 3, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Most American children are blessed with loving, stable families. But, tragically, in our country today there are too many children whose parents are unwilling or unable to care for them. While foster care offers these children a safe and nurturing temporary haven in their time of greatest need, as many as 100,000 foster care kids will need permanent homes in the next few years. Many of these children have special needs and require the security and stability of an adoptive family to develop their full potential. Adoption allows these and other children to have the permanent homes they deserve, and it enables many dedicated adults to experience the joys and rewards of parenting.

My Administration is working hard to find ways to help encourage adoption. On December 14, 1996, I issued a Memorandum to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, the Treasury, Labor, and Commerce and to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, directing them to promote efforts to both increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year and to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes. I also urged them to increase public awareness about the children waiting for permanent families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards of adoption.

I challenged the members of my Administration to work with States, communities, and civic leaders to create a plan for doubling the number of adoptions and permanent placements for children to 54,000 by the year 2002. And on February 14, 1997, the *Adoption 2002* report, outlining changes in policies and practices necessary to reach this goal, was released. Since then, we have been actively implementing the recommendations included in the report, and States are reviewing data and submitting numerical targets for adoption and guardianships to be completed by the year 2002. The Office of Personnel

Management has published a guide for Federal workers interested in adopting, and the Department of Health and Human Services is preparing to make the first annual Adoption 2002 Excellence awards later this year. Finally, the Congress is considering historic legislation that would provide the resources and statutory authority for financial incentives, technical assistance, and improved judicial decision-making for children in foster care.

As a Nation, we have before us an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children. We must continue to promote public awareness of the need for adoptive families and to help families make the choice to provide loving, permanent homes for the many children who otherwise must continue to wait. We must also strengthen our support of those families who do choose to adopt. As we observe National Adoption Month, we reaffirm our commitment to adoption as a new beginning for thousands of children, and we celebrate the many American families who have embraced these children by accepting the rewards and responsibilities of adoption.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1997 as National Adoption Month. I urge all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent homes for waiting children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 5, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 4, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on November 6.